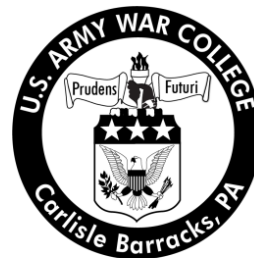


Civilian Research Project USAWC Fellow

Improving Army Operational Contract Support

by

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United States Army



United States Army War College
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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

**Improving Army
Operational Contract Support**

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Abstract

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This research examines reports conducted and recommendations made by the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations and the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General that pertain to recent contingency contracting. The research reviews reports from the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Department of Defense Task Force on Contracting and Contract Management in Expeditionary Operations. And, this research reviews the DOD Contingency Contracting Handbook. The research recommends the Army improve operational contract support at the Contracting Support Brigade organizational level by focusing on a collaborative approach between the requiring activity and the contracting office during the requirements definition step of the contracting process.

Improving Army Operational Contract Support

Despite intensive work in recent years to improve operational contract support, the Department of Defense continues to receive criticism for failing to correct recurring problems identified by the United States Department of Defense (DOD) Inspector General (IG) in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the Army was identified in the DOD reports, the key issue facing the Army in today's fiscally constrained environment is what does the Army need to focus on to improve its operational contract support. Any proposed solution must also account for the fiscally constrained environment, "Officials noted that staffing and resourcing continue to be the [DOD] department's biggest challenges and they are concerned that future budget cuts could affect progress made to date." ¹

Operational contract support is a complex process and even more so in a deployed environment. The number of civilian contractors, dollar amounts obligated, criminal fraudulent cases, and potential for waste, fraud, and abuse have drawn the attention from Congress and the most senior DOD acquisition officials. Scores of government professionals have analyzed operational contract support (the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan had eight commissioners with more than 65 supporting staff members) and made numerous recommendations for improvement to the DOD. This research effort looks at those recommendations and suggests how the Army can improve operational contract support by applying the recommendations at the Contracting Support Brigade (CSB), the primary operational contract support planner for Army Service Component Commands.

Background.

Joint Publication 4-10, *Operational Contract Support*, defines operational contract support as the process of planning for and obtaining supplies, services, and construction from commercial sources in support of joint operations along with the associated contractor management functions.² In a deployed environment, examples of needed supplies run the gamut from printer cartridges to gravel, gym equipment to concrete barriers, and specialty clothing to special fuels, and everything in between. Examples of services include base-wide Internet access, laundry cleaning, dining facility operations, personal and area security, ground line haul transportation, and short take off and landing air transportation services, among others (the author actually came close to contracting for the services of an Afghanistan neurosurgeon but the requirement was withdrawn). Finally, examples of required construction projects vary from schools to jirga³ conference centers and hospitals, just to name a few.

Even during the Revolutionary War, contracted support has received criticism. Maj. Gen. Philippe Charles Tronson du Coudray was hired to survey the defense of the Delaware River for the Continental Congress. In a statement to George Washington, Coudray writes,

...It is necessary to procure some remedy for the present weakness of the first line, by putting ourselves in a State of protecting the second and of giving thereby time to the army to arrive.

I offer to continue in this respect my care and that of the commissioned and non Commissioned Officers who attend me; but if his Excellency intends that their care should not be useless, and that an invincible disgust should not succeed the most ardent zeal, it is absolutely necessary to cause a change in the conduct, which has been observed hitherto, and to accelerate the slowness of the Civil and Military administration, to which the Congress addressed us, to procure the means of execution.⁴

Since then, the complexity of conflict has grown and so has contract support in terms of both the complexity of services provided and the ratio of contracted support personnel to soldiers, as shown in Figure 1 below, taken from the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan's interim report to Congress titled, "At What Cost? Contingency Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan" issued on June 10, 2009.

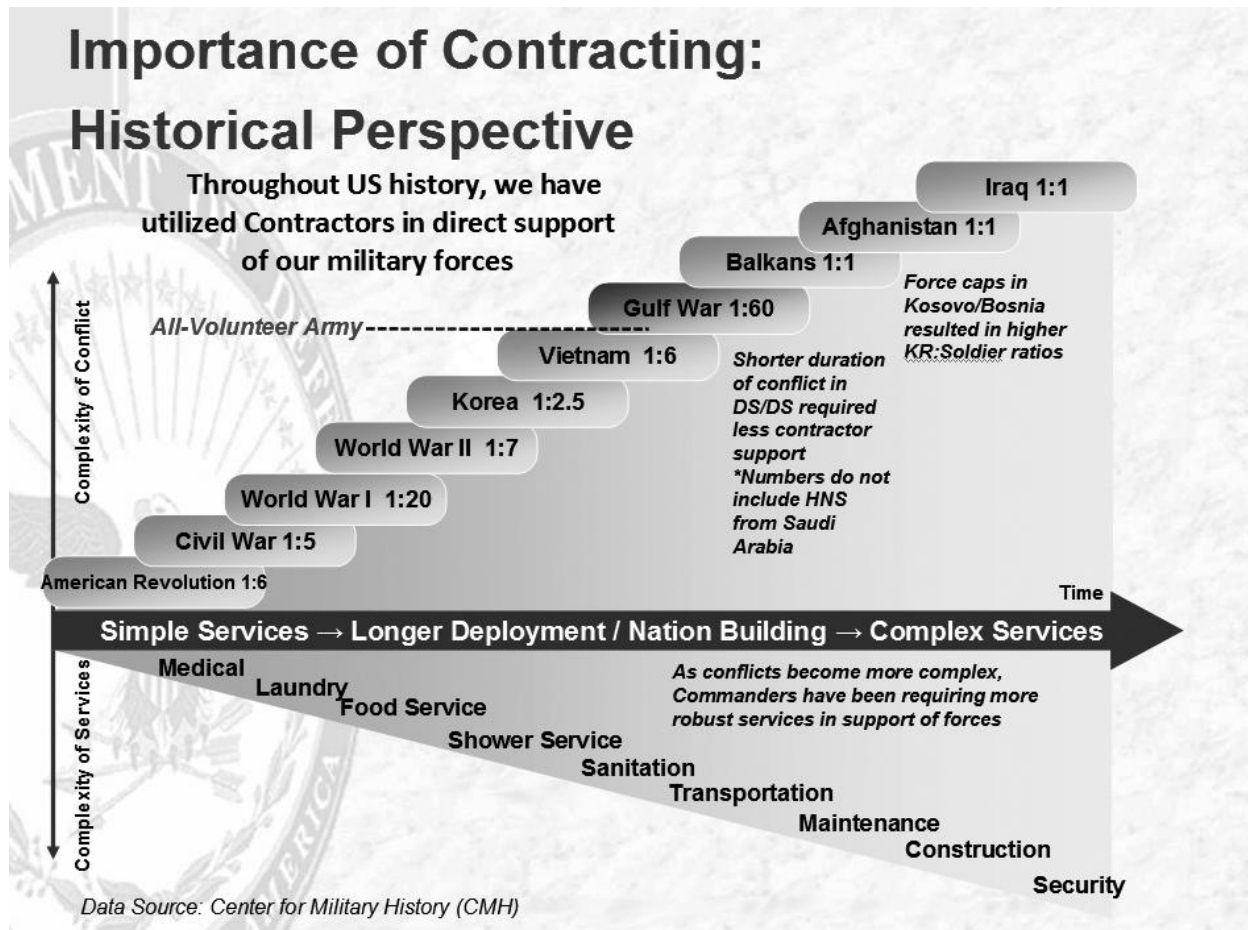


Figure 1. Importance of Contracting

According to the Department of Defense (DOD), the percentage of contracted civilians as part of the total DOD workforce in Afghanistan and Iraq was around 52% as of March 2011.⁵ Although the DOD has admitted their data is incomplete and

inaccurate, they have taken steps to improve the quality and accuracy of the data. Nonetheless, considering there were 145,000 uniformed personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, that means there were roughly the same number of contracted personnel supporting the DOD in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Even though the DOD has withdrawn U.S. troops from the Republic of Iraq, the U.S. has agreed to provide training and equipment to the Iraq Security Forces so there are still 7,336 civilian contractors operating in Iraq, as of July 2012.⁶ During the same time, DOD reported there were 113,736 contractors supporting 94,500 troops in Afghanistan.⁷

The number of contract actions in Iraq and Afghanistan and their total corresponding dollar value are astounding and give a more complete picture of the complexity and volume of work conducted by DOD contracting personnel. From Fiscal Year 2003 (FY03) to the end of FY10 in Iraq, contracting personnel completed 128,996 actions and obligated more than \$92B. For the same time period, contracting personnel completed 107,142 contract actions totaling more than \$41B in obligations in Afghanistan.⁸

Two more factors have exacerbated the challenge of operational contract support. First, the DOD was required to reduce its acquisition workforce by 25% by the end of FY 2000 due to the language contained within the DOD Authorization Act for FY96. This meant a reduction of contracting professionals in the Army's acquisition workforce from 10,000 to approximately 5,500 in 1996 (all contracting personnel reductions were taken the first year), where it has remained relatively constant since then.⁹ Secondly, while the number of personnel in the workforce has remained constant,

both the dollar value of contract actions and the number of contract actions have increased dramatically. The dollar value of Army contracts increased 331 percent to \$100.6B in 2006 while the number of Army contract actions increased 654 percent to 398,700 over the same period.¹⁰

The increase in dollar value and contract actions can be explained by the Army's growing reliance on services performed by contractors. After the Cold War ended, the DOD and the Services were pressured by congress to reduce their number of personnel. In order for the Army to retain combat power, they let go of combat service support personnel (soldiers performing the same support services now outsourced to civilian contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan) and retained combat arms personnel (so called "trigger pullers"). The Army's predicament can be summed up by, "If the military commander has gained riflemen, but not added contract professionals who can acquire the support services his unit needs, then he has lost capability."¹¹

Methodology.

This paper first reviews the major reports that frame the issue: the 2007 report from the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations that brought reform to operational contract support and two summary reports issued by the DOD IG in 2010 and 2012 that categorize recurring problems with operational contract support over their four-year review period. Next this paper will briefly review the contract process from two different perspectives – one point of view from the DOD IG contained in their two summary reports and the other point of view contained in the DOD Contingency Contracting Handbook published by the Director for the Department Of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy. Also contained within

the latter point of view is a review of the personnel involved in planning for and obtaining supplies, services, and construction from commercial sources. Then, this paper will briefly review contracting organizational changes that have occurred because of the Commission's report. This paper closes with conclusions and recommendations on how the Army can improve their operational contract support at the Contracting Support Brigade level.

Analysis.

Major Reports that Frame the Issue.

On August 29, 2007, the Secretary of the Army established the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations to review lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and to "make recommendations to assist the Department of the Army in ensuring that future such operations achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and transparency."¹² On October 31, 2007, the Commission submitted their report titled, "Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting" to then Secretary of the Army Pete Geren. This comprehensive report is commonly referred to as the "Gansler Report," so named after the Commission's chairman, Dr. Jacques S. Gansler, former Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics). The Commission made four overarching recommendations to the Secretary:¹³

- 1) Increase the stature, quantity, and career development of military and civilian contracting personnel (especially for expeditionary contracting).
- 2) Restructure organization and restore responsibility to facilitate contracting and contract management in expeditionary and CONUS¹⁴ operations.
- 3) Provide training and tools for overall contracting activities in expeditionary operations.
- 4) Obtain legislative, regulatory, and policy assistance to enable contracting effectiveness in expeditionary operations.

The commission also recommended 40 actions to achieve the above recommendations. Of those 40 actions, 22 were specific actions for the Department of the Army to address and the remaining 18 were worked by the Department of Defense.¹⁵ Even though most of this report's recommendations were either implemented as suggested or alternative solutions pursued, the Army and other Services and Defense Agencies are still plagued with criticism and negative reports with respect to their management of operational contract support.

On May 14, 2010, the Defense Department's Inspector General (DOD IG) released their report, "Contingency Contracting: A Framework for Reform," which reviewed 34 DOD IG reports and 19 Defense Criminal Investigative Services investigations to identify problematic contract management issues. The IG's main objective was to "provide DOD field commanders and contract managers with information on systemic contracting issues" gathered from reports issued from October 1, 2007 through April 1, 2010.¹⁶ Based on their findings, the DOD IG identified the following top five systemic problem areas that needed to be addressed: requirements, contract pricing, oversight and surveillance, property and accountability, and financial management. These are listed in the general sequence of the category's appearance in the overall contracting process (not, for example, in order from most serious problem area to least).¹⁷

The IG made 155 recommendations to improve oversight and surveillance with property and accountability receiving the next highest amount of recommendations with 66.¹⁸ The IG summed up the 155 recommendations by stating that, "management develop a QASP [Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan] and properly designate and

train CORs [Contracting Officer Representatives].”¹⁹ It is important to note that although the Gansler report identified deficiencies in contract surveillance and training of both contracting and non-contracting personnel involved in the contracting process (e.g., CORs, logisticians, and commanders), it is unlikely that DOD had sufficient time to fully implement the Gansler report’s recommendations to achieve positive results during the entire timeframe covered within this DOD IG report.

On September 18, 2012, the DOD IG published an update to their 2010 report to “discuss current contingency contracting problems, as well as re-emphasize ongoing problems identified in [their May 14, 2010 report]”.²⁰ Consistent with their original report, the IG reviewed 38 reports issued from April 2, 2010 through March 31, 2012 and found that the same top five systemic problem areas existed²¹ with oversight and surveillance issues cited in the majority of both reports. Specifically, oversight and surveillance was an issue in 24 out of 34 IG reports in the 2010 report and also in 24 out of 38 reports the 2012 report reviewed.²² Additionally, similar to the 2010 report, the oversight and surveillance category received the overwhelming majority (109) of recommendations for improvement. The IG summed up their recommendations by saying, “Program and contracting officials must ensure that sufficient contract oversight occurs and that oversight personnel are adequately trained.”²³

Contracting Process from Two Different Perspectives.

Both DOD IG reports contain the same flowchart showing the “Key Aspects of the Contracting Process” in the hopes of leading to “immediate improvements in the environment of contingency operations.”²⁴ The IG reports state:

Commanders and contract managers can use these charts to assess their contracting operations, to identify areas that could be improved, to ensure the

best contracting practices are implemented, and to identify vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, and abuse.²⁵

The DOD IG based the flowchart on Federal and DOD acquisition guidance, depicting four separate sequential phases: pre-award, award, contract administration, and contract closeout.²⁶ The flowchart also illustrates major sequential steps to complete within each phase and actions that should be taken for each of those steps during contract and program management. Three steps were identified within the pre-award phase: requirements development, acquisition planning, and solicitation. The award phase contains two steps: source selection and award. The third phase, contract administration, comprises three steps: contract monitoring, acceptance of supplies/services, and payments. The last phase, contract closeout, is also the last step they identified in their depiction of the contracting process. Put another way, these are the DOD IG's key aspects of the contracting process:

- Pre-award
 - Requirements Development
 - Acquisition Planning
 - Solicitation
- Award
 - Source Selection
 - Award
- Contract Administration
 - Contract Monitoring
 - Acceptance of Supplies/Services
 - Payments
- Contract Closeout

Also on the flowchart, the DOD IG highlighted in red those actions for each step that represent systemic issue areas they have found during their audits. In both audits, all of the actions under requirements development, contract monitoring, and payments were highlighted in red, meaning the IG did not find improvement in any of the systemic

issue areas during their follow-up audit. Since the IG identified these three steps as recurring issue areas, they warrant a closer review.

The IG classified the requirements step in the pre-award phase as a recurring contracting issue area, suggesting:

- Contracting activities and their customers should consider both technical needs and business strategies when defining and specifying requirements.
- The Government must define and describe agency requirements that explain the required results in clear, specific, and objective terms with measurable outcomes in a statement of work...
- Determine that all documentation processes are in place...²⁷

The IG identified the following recurring contracting issue areas during the contract administration phase while performing the contract monitoring step:

- Contracting officers perform oversight and surveillance to ensure that supplies or services conform to contract requirements.
- The contracting officer is responsible for ensuring that there is an effective process for measuring the contractor's performance that includes clearly defined levels of contractor surveillance.
- A fully developed and appropriately structured contract surveillance system is crucial to ensure that the contractor is:
 - o performing on schedule.
 - o current in its understanding of the requirements.
 - o and applying adequate skills and resources to the contractual task.²⁸

The third step which consistently represented recurring issues was payments, also a step under contract administration. The IG suggested improvement for these actions:

- Payments made by the Government should directly correlate to a contractual document, contractor invoice, and acceptance or receiving report.
- Invoice reviews by contracting officer's representative and Defense Contract Audit Agency.
- Financial management of funds for contract to include:

- Ensuring appropriated funds are used to fund the contract.
- Ensuring fund obligations are not in excess of appropriated funding.²⁹

The following paragraphs review the DOD's contingency contracting handbook in order to obtain a different perspective and better understanding of the contracting process and personnel involved in that process. Contingency contracting is a term that means the process of obtaining goods, services, and construction via contracting means in support of contingency operations.³⁰ Therefore, contingency contracting is similar to operational contract support but is used more as the generic term for getting items and services on contract in a deployed environment.

In response to the Gansler Report, the DOD's Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy authorized publication of a 408 page pocket-sized defense contingency contracting handbook. The handbook "serves as a consolidated source of information for CCOs [contingency contracting officers] who are conducting contingency contracting operations in a Joint environment."³¹ Figure 2 on the next page is taken from the handbook and shows the basic contracting process and those personnel or units involved in the process.

Unlike the DOD IG's flowchart, the handbook shows that the contracting process involves more than just the contracting office. Even though several organizations take part in contracting, the contracting office and the requiring activity are the most involved in the process, not including the actual contractors fulfilling the requirements of the contract.

As seen in this handbook's process, the contract action begins by the requiring activity defining the requirement and, for Army requirements, entering pertinent information on a form called a purchase request and commitment (PR&C) which is used

for tracking and routing purposes. The requiring activity must also develop additional documentation such as the Independent Government Estimate (IGE) and any justifications as required by DOD and Federal acquisition regulations. If the requirement is for services or construction, the requiring activity needs to develop a Statement of Work (SOW) too.

Next, the requiring activity takes the PR&C to the resource manager to ensure adequate funding is available to fund the requirement. The “funded” PR&C together with the other documents developed by the requiring activity become the requirements package. The requiring activity takes the requirements package to the supporting contracting office.

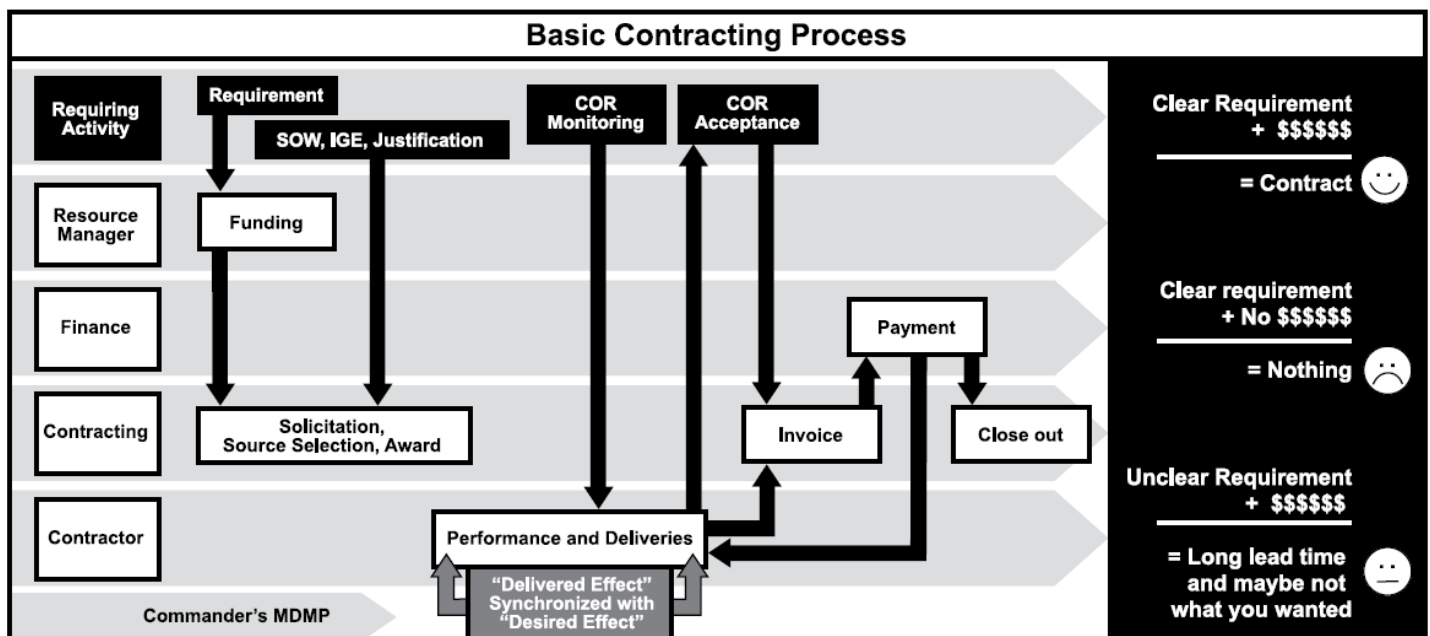


Figure 2. Defense Contingency Contracting Handbook Contracting Process

The contracting office then assigns the requirements package to a contracting officer, often referred to as a “KO,” who checks the requirements package for adequacy and accuracy. Next, the KO puts together a solicitation, performs a source selection,

and awards the contract in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other DOD, Service specific, and theater specific guidance.

Once the contract has been awarded, the selected contractor can begin work. If the requirement is for services or construction, the requiring activity must nominate a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). The COR's main purpose is to, "monitor contract performance and provide the contracting officer with documentation of the contractor's compliance (or noncompliance) with the terms and conditions of the contract."³² Since the COR is the "eyes and ears" of the contracting officer, the KO must formally appoint the COR in writing and provide the necessary training so that the COR understands the terms and conditions of the contract.

After completion of the construction project or service period, the contractor submits the invoice to the contracting officer for verification that work was performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract. Once the KO verifies the work has been completed with the COR, the KO then submits the certified invoice to the finance office for payment to the contractor. As soon as the final payment has been made, the KO can close the contract file.

Contracting Organizational Changes.

In response to the Gansler Report, then Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Pete Geren, issued a memorandum ordering the establishment of the Army Contracting Command (ACC) and realignment of the U.S. Army Contracting Agency under the ACC.³³ The command was provisionally activated as a two-star billet on March 13, 2008, with members of the Gansler commission in attendance.³⁴ Additionally, two one-star subordinate commands with distinct responsibilities were created – the

Expeditionary Contract Command responsible for contracting support to forward-deployed and forward-stationed forces and the Installation Contracting Command (now known as the Mission and Installation Contracting Command) responsible for contracting support for CONUS (continental United States) installations.³⁵

As soon as the Honorable Pete Geren established the ACC, major contracting organizations with large geographic area responsibilities transitioned to Contracting Support Brigades. For example, the U.S. Army Contracting Center –Europe became the 409th Contracting Support Brigade.

The CSBs are now aligned with a specific regionally focused Army Service Component Command or Army Corps Headquarters. Figure 3 on the next page, from Field Manual 4-92, *Contracting Support Brigade*, shows the relationship between the CSBs and their respective Army Service Component Command. The Contracting Support Brigade is

...the primary operational contract support planner, advisor and contracting commander to the ASCC. The CSB, through contracting authority delegated by the ECC, executes theater support contracting actions in support of deployed Army Forces command and coordinates other common contracting actions as directed by the supported commander.³⁶

Since the publication of FM 4-92, the Army contracting organization has continued to grow. For instance, the 414th CSB now has the responsibility for SETAF and the Army will activate two more contracting support brigades in FY13 – the 418th CSB will be aligned with III Corps at Fort Hood, TX, and the 419th CSB will be aligned to XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, NC. This will bring the total number of contracting support brigades to nine.

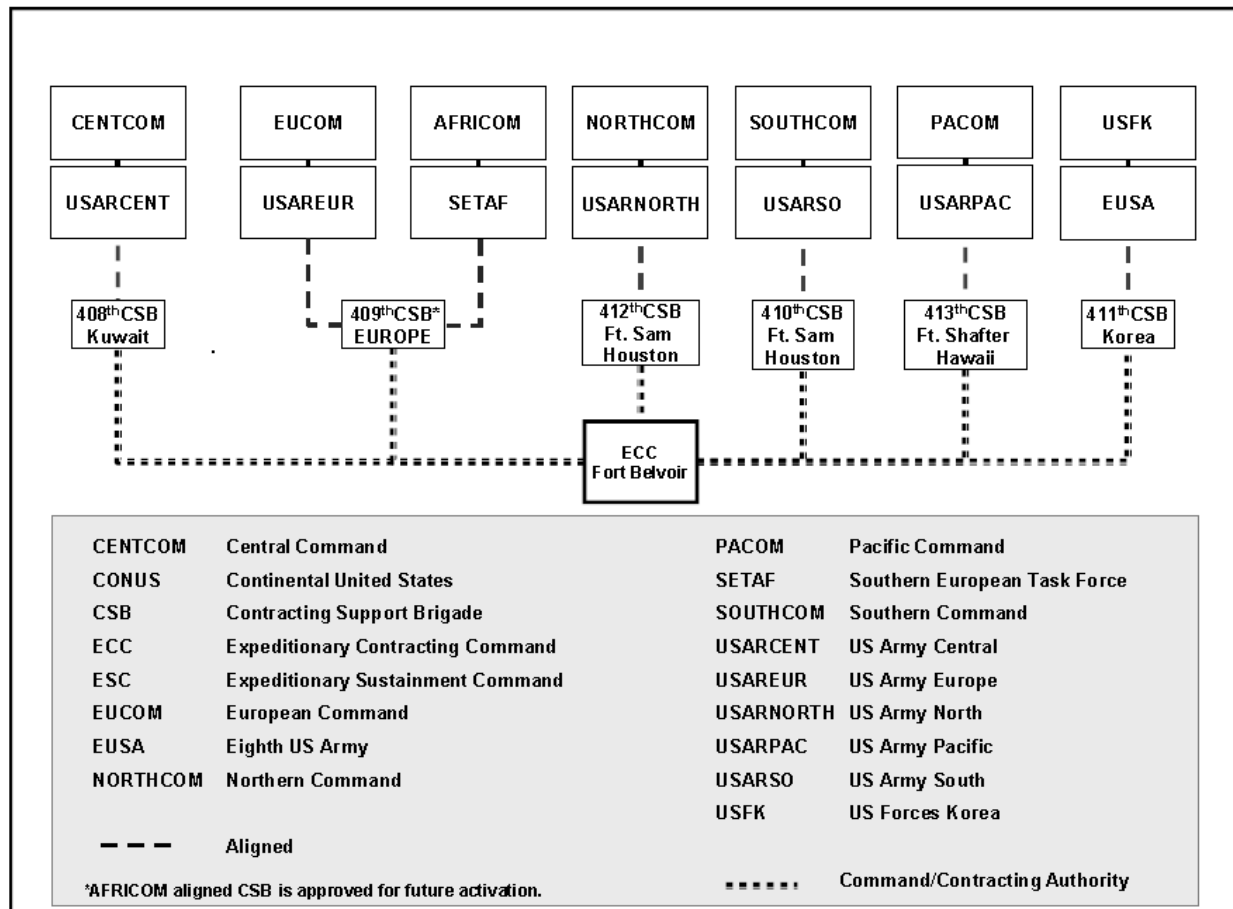


Figure 3. Alignment of Contracting Support Brigades

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper recommends the Army focus efforts at the Contracting Support Brigade level toward the requirements development step of the contracting process to improve operational contract support. More specifically, the interaction and collaboration between the contracting officer, requiring activity, and contracting officer's representative needs emphasis and improvement.

As discussed in the previous section, the CSB is the primary planner for operational contract support. And, the contracting support brigades are charged with accomplishing theater support contracting actions for deployed Army forces. In this respect, the organizational level of the CSBs is the best level to focus on to affect and

improve operational contract support. The CSB commander is the contracting commander for the Army Service Component Command. In this role, the CSB commander executes command and control over assigned or attached contracting units operating in the ASCC's area of responsibility.

The Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan³⁷ recognized the need for DOD and other agencies to improve their requirements development. In the Commission's final report to Congress in August 2011, they stated, "Departments and agencies must realize that they need to do a better job of selecting projects and programs, defining the work to be done, coordinating their efforts, and managing the contractors they engage."³⁸

None of the steps involved in the contracting process can be ignored, and each must be done to the best ability of those involved. However, since contracting is essentially a sequential process with the first step being requirements development, that first step is arguably the most important since all the following steps exist solely to fulfill the requirement defined in the initial step. Therefore, based on the importance of this first step in the contracting process, the comments from the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan given to Congress, and the findings from both DOD IG audit reports conducted after the Gansler Report was published, this paper recommends the Army focus on a collaborative approach between the contracting officer, the requiring activity, and the COR to improve their communication efforts during requirements development.

Since the joint publication for operational contract support states contracting is not a "fire and forget" process,³⁹ contracting and non-contracting personnel need to do a

better job discussing what each thinks the requirement is or should be. Discussing is the operative word here, implying two-way communication and an exchange of ideas. Requirements definition should not be a series of one-way communications exchanged through e-mail. In essence, a collaborative effort needs to be clearly emphasized.

Both of the IG reports and the DOD Defense Contingency Contracting Handbook lack emphasis on a collaborative approach throughout the contracting process. The IG reports focus on the process but not on the personnel that are needed to carry out the process. At least the DOD handbook shows the people involved in the process but still lacks the interaction between the important players. If we continue to view only the process and not the interactions of the individuals within the process, the requirement development step will remain problematic. In this light, the requirement itself is simply data or information. The goal should be to transform the information into knowledge that the requiring activity and contracting office can use.

As an author from the field of sociology pronounces, knowledge is, “an outcome of the interactions, negotiations, interfaces and accommodations that take place between different actors and their lifeworlds.”⁴⁰ When applied to operational contracting, the pertinent actors are personnel from the requiring activity (and their contracting officer’s representative nominees); contracting, finance, and resource management offices; and the contractors providing the commercial products, services or construction.

In this paper I argue that the most important actors are from the contracting office and requiring activity in order to ensure an accurate requirement is developed at the outset. Focusing on the early stage of the contracting process, the actors involved and

their collaborative effort improve the chances of success later in the process. Brigadier General Edward Dorman, Director of Operations and Logistics Readiness for the Army and the chief proponent for U.S. Army operational contract support articulated this point in a briefing to senior leaders of the Expeditionary Contracting Command, “Correcting OCS issues that occur in the earlier phases of the process have had a positive effect on downstream [contract process] issues.”⁴¹

Purchasing in the commercial world also recognizes the need for a cooperative, close working relationship between the purchasing section (the contracting officer in an operational contract support illustration) and the requisitioning unit or person (the requiring activity) early in the purchasing process. During the “Description of Need” (requirements definition in our OCS example) step in the “Purchasing Process,” the Purchasing Handbook sponsored by the National Association of Purchasing Management says, “The requisitioning unit or person should work closely with purchasing... Cooperation at this level prevents conflicts later in the process.”⁴² Working closely and early in the contracting process helps avert issues during subsequent steps of the process.

Without a collaborative approach between the actors involved in the contracting process, the information exchange lacks a rich communication environment where knowledge is developed, ideas are explored, and accommodations are made. With an emphasis on collaboration and two-way communication, an amicable solution can be reached that describes the requirement as a feasible, supportable and realistic idea.

Communication needs to be bilateral because both sides have different perspectives and experiences that can improve the definition and understanding of the

requirement. On the one side you have contracting personnel drawing on their experience with forming and letting contracts in the past. Perhaps they have dealt with similar requirements before and know what worked and what didn't work. Often times contracting personnel have operational experience gained before they transitioned to the contracting career field, so they can use that experience to draw from and relate to the requiring activity. However, contracting personnel do not fully understand the requirement because they do not have the customer's total perspective.

On the other side you have personnel from the requiring activity. They bring background, context, and other attributes such as the commander's intent, which is necessary to fully understand and accurately portray the requirement. Using a collaborative approach, the requiring activity and contracting personnel can then functionally decompose the requirement into logical, manageable pieces to build the performance work statement or statement of work, for example. Additionally, the requiring activity has management responsibility over the non-contracting personnel that are required to successfully assist in administering the contract, which brings us to the next most important step of the contract process.

The second most important part of the contract process where the Army needs to improve is contract oversight and surveillance. This assertion is based on the DOD IG findings and the majority of issues cited in their two recent major reviews. For example, in 48 out of the 72 reports issued during this cumulative four-year review period, there were a total of 264 recommendations for improvement related to contract oversight and surveillance. Additionally, the Gansler report and the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan noted many deficiencies in contract oversight and

surveillance although their analyses and recommendations did not lend themselves to assert whether one issue was more important or prevalent than another.

The improved collaborative approach discussed earlier that was established during the requirements definition process will benefit the contract oversight and surveillance function. More specifically, the need for a Contracting Officer Representative (COR) – appointed in writing and trained by the contracting officer and responsible for monitoring contract performance⁴³ – is identified, discussed, and planned for during the requirements definition phase. With these responsibilities, the COR plays a pivotal role in successful contract oversight and surveillance. Communicating the need for a COR early allows the requiring activity ample time to plan for and nominate a service member or DOD civilian and allows sufficient time for the COR to complete necessary training.

The contracting officer is responsible for training the COR on contract specific tasks that require oversight. Here, the Army needs to improve two-way communication since it is paramount to ensure the COR understands what is required of him or her, and the contracting officer is confident the COR possesses the requisite experience and ability to effectively monitor the contractor's performance. Often, the COR is not the same person that started the contracting process with a requirement or may not even be assigned to the requiring activity that initiated the requirement. And, since the COR usually does not have contracting or acquisition experience, the contracting officer can use this opportunity to answer any contract questions the COR may have and verify the COR understands what the requirement is.

Here again the focus should be on a collaborative approach between the contracting officer and the contracting officer's representative and not just the process of the COR's appointment, his or her training, and monitoring the contract. This interaction is especially important if the COR has only recently been notified of their COR responsibilities.

Additionally, interaction at this point in the contract process is especially important. Much like how early collaboration at the requirements development step will positively affect subsequent phases and steps in the process, good communication and interaction between the contracting officer and the COR should reduce problems downstream as the acquisition progresses and positively address the recurring issues identified by the two DOD IG reports.

The handbook published by the DOD for Contracting Officer's Representatives does not emphasize a collaborative approach. The handbook does mention the importance of "open communication among, and due diligence of, the contracting officer, COR, COR supervisor, requiring organization, and contractor"⁴⁴ but that statement is in the foreword of the handbook. Additionally, "open communication" is not the same as two-way communication coupled with a collaborative approach.

The COR handbook is broken down into 12 chapters, each with their own area of concentration ranging from ethics and integrity to foreign acquisition and international relationships. Each chapter of the COR's handbook also contains a key points section for quick reference and to summarize the salient meaning contained within the chapter. For example, Chapter 5 is titled, "The Acquisition Team and Process," but its key points fail to declare the importance of the relationship between the personnel involved in the

process. The information contained within the chapter does a pretty good job of describing the importance of the acquisition team:

No one person has all the skills necessary for successful contract management. It requires a team with members who each have specialized expertise and responsibilities.⁴⁵

However, what the chapter lacks is an emphasis on the importance of the interaction between team members. In the chapter's "Framework for Team Success," the key framework for a successful acquisition team is listed as partnership, informed decisions, sound planning, and efficient execution. You can have the best team members available operating in their own little worlds, but if they don't collaborate and interact, successful mission accomplishment (in this case, the contractor meeting the specifications of the contract) is unlikely or more difficult to achieve at the very least.

Faced with deep cuts in defense spending, it's unlikely that the Army will see an increase in personnel to assist in addressing the systemic issues identified by the DOD IG reports. Therefore, the Army will have to make improvements with existing contracting and non-contracting personnel already in the ranks.

The contracting process can be complex and complicated – even more so in a contingency environment. Confronted with the sheer volume and diverse criticism from many different government sources, it may be frustrating and difficult for the Army to decide where best to improve its contracting support for operational forces, particularly after nearly all the Gansler report recommendations have been implemented.⁴⁶

However, by focusing on the collaborative interaction and bilateral communication between the contracting officer, the requiring activity, and the COR, the Army will improve its operational contract support.

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Contingency Contracting: Agency Actions to Address Recommendations by the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan: Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, August 1, 2012, pg 30.

² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Operational Contract Support*. Joint Publication 4-10. Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, October 17, 2008, pg. GL-8.

³ Jirga is an assembly where tribal leaders and influential bodies gather to decide on issues of special importance concerning the community's vital national, regional and international interests. <http://jirga.gov.af/en>

⁴ Paul K. Walker, *Engineers of Independence: A Documentary History of Army Engineers in the American Revolution, 1775-1783*, (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1981), 151.

⁵ Moshe Schwartz and Joyprada Swain, *Department of Defense Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq: Background and Analysis*. Congressional Research Service, May 13, 2011, pg 6. www.crs.gov (R40764).

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General. *Contingency Contracting: A Framework for Reform 2012 Update*. Alexandria, VA, September 18, 2012, pg. 2. <http://www.dodig.mil/audit/reports/fy12/DODIG-2012-134.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks*. Arlington, VA, August 2011, pg 219. <http://www.wartimecontracting.gov>

⁹ Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations, *Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting*. October 31, 2007, pg 30. http://www.army.mil/docs/Gansler_Commission_Report_Final_071031.pdf

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, pg 13.

¹² Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks*, pg 167.

¹³ Ibid, pg. 5.

¹⁴ CONUS is Continental United States

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense Task Force on Contracting and Contract Management in Expeditionary Operations (Task Force 849). *Department of Defense Evaluation and Implementation of Recommendations from the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations Report to Congress*. Washington, DC, June 2, 2008, pg. 2.
<http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/pacc/cc/docs/section849.pdf>.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General. *Contingency Contracting: A Framework for Reform*. Alexandria, VA, May 14, 2010, pg. 1.
<http://www.dodig.mil/audit/reports/fy10/10-059.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. iii-iv

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 31-32.

¹⁹ Ibid, pg. 31.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General. *Contingency Contracting: A Framework for Reform 2012 Update*. Alexandria, VA, September 18, 2012, pg. i. <http://www.dodig.mil/audit/reports/fy12/DODIG-2012-134.pdf>.

²¹ Ibid, pg. 4.

²² Ibid, pg. 53.

²³ Ibid, pg. 36.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General. *Contingency Contracting: A Framework for Reform*, pg ii.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid, pg. iii.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid 2 above, pg. GL-5.

³¹ US Department of Defense, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, *Defense Contingency Contracting Handbook, Version 4*, Washington, D.C., October 2012, pg. 6. <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/ccap/cc/jchb/>.

³² US Department of Defense, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, *Defense Contingency COR Handbook, Version 2*, Washington, D.C., September 2012, pg. 15. <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/ccap/cc/corhb/>.

³³ U.S. Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, "Realignment of the U.S. Army Contracting Agency and Establishment of the U.S. Army Contracting Command," memorandum for Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), Commanding General, Army Materiel Command, and Director, Army Contracting Agency, Washington, DC, January 30, 2008.

³⁴ U.S. Department of Defense Task Force on Contracting and Contract Management in Expeditionary Operations (Task Force 849). *Department of Defense Evaluation and Implementation of Recommendations from the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations Report to Congress*, Appendix G, pg. 5

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, Contracting Support Brigade, Field Manual 4-92 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 2010) pg. 1-2.

³⁷ The independent, bipartisan Commission was created by Congress under Public Law 110-181 to assess contingency contracting and, among other things, provide recommendations to Congress to improve the structures, policies, and resources for managing the contracting process and contractors.

³⁸ Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks*, pg 167.

³⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Operational Contract Support*, pg. III-2.

⁴⁰ Norman Long, Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives (2001), in EBSCO Publishing eBook Collection via University of Texas at Austin (accessed February 18, 2013).

⁴¹ Brigadier General Edward Dorman, Director, Operations and Logistics Readiness, "Operational Contract Support: Philosophy, Policy & Plans," briefing slides, Fort Bliss Texas, January 18, 2013.

⁴² Harold E. Fearon, Donald W. Dobler, and Kenneth H. Killen, eds., *The Purchasing Handbook*, Fifth Edition (McGraw-Hill, Inc 1993), pg. 16.

⁴³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Operational Contract Support*, pg GL-6.

⁴⁴ Ibid 32 above, pg. 10.

⁴⁵ US Department of Defense, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, *Defense Contingency COR Handbook*, pg. 70.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Defense Task Force on Contracting and Contract Management in Expeditionary Operations (Task Force 849). *Department of Defense Evaluation and Implementation of Recommendations from the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations Report to Congress*, appendix G.